

On Korean copula *-ida*: A Comparative study with Japanese *-da*

This study aims to confirm the properties of Korean copula ‘-ida’ through a comparative study with the Japanese equivalent ‘-da’. Historically study of ‘-ida’ has been focused on its categorization or classification of whether it is a verb, affix, particle or other. However, recent studies have presented the need for differing approaches to ‘-ida’ e.g. attempts to identify the properties through analyzing various constructions of ‘-ida’. Comparative approaches, especially with Japanese which has typological similarity to Korean, which could be a new attempt will be meaningful.

We will split constructions of ‘-ida’ into four groups: (1) Types of ‘N1-i/ga N2-ida’ (N1=N2 or N1<N2), (2) Types of ‘N2-ida’, (3) Types of context-dependent, (4) Types of which N2 is verbal noun, to organize characteristics of ‘-ida’ contrasting with Japanese ‘-da’ in respective groups. In conclusion, we will argue that Korean ‘-ida’ basically tends to require syntactic subjective and make predicates of the N2 compared with the Japanese ‘-da’.

(1) Types of ‘N1-i/ga N2-ida’(N1=N2 or N1<N2) are regarded as typical types of copula sentences with the following examples: ‘i geonmul-i cheongwadae-ida(This building is the Blue House).’ / ‘aitsu-wa baka-da(He is an idiot).’ There might be several classifications of sentences by semantic relations between N1 and N2, and by the use of particles, but ‘-ida’ and ‘-da’ represent similar meanings and use in that they both are predicates that require two nouns as subject(N1) and predicate(N2) in equal or subsumptional relations. (2) Types of ‘N2-ida’ are, without ‘N1-i/ga’, use including meanings of presentation, wonder, surprise, and so on. There are expressions of this type in both Korean and Japanese: ‘jumunhasin kapelate-bnida((This) is Cafe latte you ordered).’ / ‘sugoi yuki-da((It) is a heavy snow).’ But Japanese ‘-da’ only can express asking something or presentation of a reason for the following utterance, etc. In Korean ‘-ida’ sentences N1 needs to be visible or be supposable in the context. (3) Types of context-dependent are copula-like sentences which have the abnormal subject-predicate relation between N1 and N2 like in ‘na-n keopi-da(I am (=I’ll have) a coffee).’ / ‘boku-wa unagi-da(I am (=I’ll have) an eel).’ Korean ‘-ida’ is hardly used unless the relations between N1 and N2 are predictable, so has more constrictions on producing this type of sentences than Japanese ‘-da’. (4) Types of which N2 is verbal noun(‘na-neun ibeon il-e bandae-da.(=I’m opposed to this)’ / ‘watashi-mo sore-niwa hantai-da(=I’m opposed to that as well).’) are actually not copula sentences, but verbal sentences in which the copula can be altered by light verbs such as ‘hada’ or ‘suru’(=do). Japanese ‘-da’ is more productive and has more diverse functions in this type as well.

If we can say that (1) are typical copula sentences (or prototype), then the prototypicality gets weaker towards (2), (3) and (4). Defining the prototypicality of copula as *predicativity* which is syntactic and semantic connecting predicate(N2) to subject(N1), the lower predicativity sentence has the less use of Korean ‘-ida’, while Japanese ‘-da’ has extended its functions into non-copula sentences or has more grammaticalized than ‘-ida’.

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